

the civil power at defiance in the intricacy of their fastnesses, laid all the surrounding country under that species of contribution so well known at the time it was exacted, by the name of Black-mail.

This prodigious tree was measured by the Hon. Judge Barrington, before the year 1770, and is stated by him to have been at that time fifty-two feet in circumference; but Pennant describes it as measuring fifty-six feet and a half. The same elegant tourist also speaks of it as having formerly been united to the height of three feet; Captain Campbell, of Glenlyon, having assured him that when a boy, he had often climbed over the connecting part. It is now, however, decayed to the ground, and completely divided into two distinct stems, between which the funeral processions were formerly accustomed to pass. It is impossible to ascertain its age; but judging from its present state and appearance, it is not too much to suppose that its date is contemporary with that of Fingal himself, whose descendants the Highlanders in its vicinity are fond of styling themselves.

From the earliest ages the Yew tree has been considered an emblem of mourning. As such it was held sacred by the Egyptians, who transmitted their idea of it to the Greeks; from them it was adopted by the Romans, who in their turn imparted it to the Britons. In the church-yards of North and South Wales, in particular, it abounds even at the present time; and in many of the villages in these provinces, the Yew tree and the Church are coeval. It was formerly not less common in the church-yards of Italy; and in the original charter for building the Church at Perone, in Picardy, dated in the year 684, a remarkable clause is inserted, containing directions for the proper preservation of a particular Yew tree. This individual Yew tree was in existence in the year 1799, near 1100 years after this notice of it in the charter, which may consequently be regarded as a valuable document towards ascertaining the great durability of this species of wood. The custom of planting the Yew tree singly, as if loneliness of situation added to the sacredness of its character, is very ancient. Statius, in his sixth Thebaid, calls it "the solitary Yew;" and it is indeed seldom to be found in groups, excepting in the immediate vicinity of the grave. Nevertheless, on the island of Incheonakhead in Loch Lomond, there are several thousand large Yew trees, perhaps the only plantation of the same kind and extent in Europe, and which probably owes its origin to the period when archery was almost the sole mode of warfare.

PLATE II.—THE LARCHES AT DUNKELD.

THE LARCH is a native of the Alps and Appennine mountains, and has not been introduced into this country more than a century. It is of quick growth, and flourishes best in poor soils, and exposed situations, which renders it valuable in those places, where land is of little other value than to afford footing for such hardy mountaineers. It is likewise esteemed for the substance commonly called Venice turpentine, which it yields in great abundance, by means of incisions made in the trunk; it also exudes from the pores of the wood, under the action of the sun, and renders it capable of resisting wet; hence it is much used in Switzerland for covering the roofs of houses.

The Larches represented in the accompanying plate, are the property of his Grace the Duke of Athol, and are supposed to be the largest in Scotland. The largest of them was measured in the month of March, 1796, and its dimensions were as follow. At three feet from the ground, ten feet and a half in circumference; at twenty-four feet from the ground, seven feet seven inches; its height eighty-five feet. In July, 1825, it was measured again, and at the same distances from the ground, it was found to be thirteen feet, and nine feet five inches in circumference, and had increased in height to ninety-seven feet and a half. It was brought to Dunkeld about ninety years ago, by Colonel Menzies, of Culdars, being the first that was introduced into Scotland; and under the idea of its being a tender shrub, the first five years of its transplantation were passed in the shelter of a green-house. These graceful trees are surrounded by objects of the most interesting nature; their branches almost touch the venerable remains of the Abbey of Dunkeld, whilst the bleak and barren hill which was once Birnham-wood, rises behind in the distance, and fills the imagination of the spectator with poetic feeling; with thoughts of Macbeth, and Dunsinane, and of that master spirit who could thus give to airy nothings

"A local habitation and a name,"

that should make the lapse of centuries appear as moments only; so freshly does all he has ever described rush into the mind, whenever the scenes he has chosen for his actions present themselves to the eye.